

Congressman Helped Secure \$4.3 Million in Federal Funding for Job-Creating Project

Woodridge, NY - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today joined federal and local officials for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate and formally open the new Village of Woodridge Wastewater Treatment Facility for which he was instrumental in securing \$4.3 million in federal funding. In making the announcement, the congressman was joined by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Regional Administrator Judith Enck, Area Director for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Ronda Falkena, Village of Woodridge Mayor Louis Saperstein and Town of Fallsburg Supervisor Steve Vegliante. Allison Epstein, District Director for Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther and Ivan Katz, Former Mayor of the Village of Woodridge were also on hand for the announcement.

"Woodridge will now have a modern and effective wastewater treatment system that will serve local residents and businesses for many years and ensure the protection of the local environment and water quality," said Hinchey. "My staff and I worked with the village for many years to secure the EPA and USDA funding for this project, which now totals more than \$4.3 million. This critical federal investment has helped lessen the financial burden on local ratepayers and helped bring about the completion of this essential project."

The Village of Woodridge's wastewater treatment facility, which was constructed in 1983, had increasingly failed to meet regulatory standards, and studies determined that the construction of a new plant was the most cost efficient and effective alternative.

After making a large number of calls and meeting with key federal officials, Hinchey was able to secure \$4.3 million to defray the cost of the \$11.8 million facility. At Hinchey's urging, a \$2.36 million grant was provided by USDA through the Rural Development Agency. The congressman also worked to secure an EPA contribution of an additional \$2 million based on a prior commitment the agency made under an innovative technology grant that it made to the Village several decades ago. The Village of Woodridge was under a Consent Decree from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation due to the former plant's discharge of pollutants into the nearby Neversink River - an important trout stream.

The village received preferential consideration for USDA assistance because of its location in the Sullivan-Wawarsing Rural Economic Area Partnership (REAP) Zone, a special U.S.

Department of Agriculture (USDA) designation for the area that Hinchey established in 1999. Most of the remaining cost of the project is being funded through a no-interest loan from the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation.